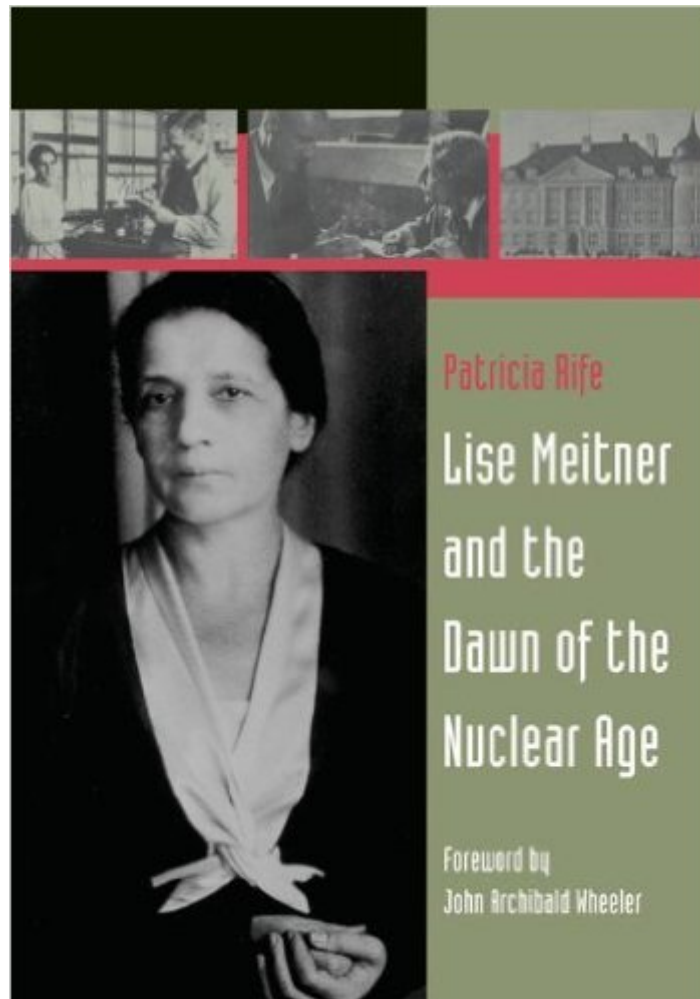


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Lise Meitner And The Dawn Of The Nuclear Age



Synopsis

In this fascinating biography, Patricia Rife interprets both the life and times of Lise Meitner (1878–1968), providing a rich background of the scientific discoveries and social milieu that affected the research, events, personalities, and politics of 20th century quantum physics. Rife asks the central question of why, given the priority evidence of Meitner's role in the interpretation of nuclear fission, was she too not awarded the Nobel Prize?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While there has been a recent renewed interest in the life of Lise Meitner, and a number of biographies have appeared, this I believe is the first one to focus on physics, as opposed to personalities. I may add that the authors do weave together an entangled web of scientists, their thoughts (through correspondence), their ambitions, and their (in many cases) flawed judgments. And the narrative is captivating! Lise Meitner was born in Vienna in 1878, and she started her career in the turbulent times of the First World War, at a time when Germany was a clear leader in physics research, in the Golden Era of physics. Yet, Lise Meitner was the first woman German scientist; first PhD in physics. When she started her studies, German universities were almost entirely closed to women; and especially so in the sciences. The authors bring to life the turbulent events in modern history which shaped Lise Meitner's career. A central theme in the book is the physics community's reaction to the first use by the USA of a fission bomb over Japan in 1945. In Berlin, building on a decade of research by Meitner and Otto Hahn, in 1938, the three Lise Meitner, Hahn, and Fritz

Strassmann discovered nuclear fission. The Nobel Prize went to Hahn alone, and Lise Meitner has until recently been largely forgotten. In this interesting book, the authors examine why. Readers may find that the reasons are different from what we might have guessed. Many of the German scientists in the 1930s were Jewish, or partly Jewish, and they were dismissed by Hitler in 1933, or in the years up to the war. The year before the outbreak of war in 1939 was the last chance to escape, and the entire physics community dispersed as German scientists had to flee, --- some chose to escape.

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